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Marcos Fortune: Its Sources Raise Questions

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 19 — As has often happened in the history of the Philippines, official corruption is emerging as a central issue within the nation. Now, according to Congressional sources and Administration officials, it is becoming an increasingly important factor in relations between the United States and the Philippines.

The corruption issue figured in an unsuccessful effort to impeach President Ferdinand E. Marcos last summer. Op-

position leaders have said they intend to bring it up in the elections scheduled for early next year and may refile impeachment charges with new documentation.

In the United States, Congressional investigators and a Federal grand jury in the Washington area are looking into corruption in the Philippines.

At the heart of the issue is President Marcos, his wife, Imelda, and their associates. Filipino opposition leaders and official American reports have

charged that the Marcos family and their friends have drained the economy while enriching themselves and then transferred billions of dollars abroad.

A Senate Intelligence Committee staff report made public this month summarized the charge against the Marcos family this way: "Corruption has become a serious burden on the economy. The first family and their favored cronies use their position to amass great wealth, much of which is

transferred abroad."

President and Mrs. Marcos have publicly denied the charges. Unlike in the United States, the first family in the Philippines does not have to make a public accounting of its finances. Mr. and Mrs. Marcos have not responded to a list of questions about their finances submitted to the Philippines Embassy by a New York Times reporter last summer.

Philippine opposition leaders have uncovered what they believe to be Marcos family holdings all over the world, but none of the assets are held in the Marcos name. Marcos supporters say the information is unsubstantiated and based on partisan politics.

A survey of public records in the United States and the Philippines, as well as interviews with Marcos business associates and American and Philippine officials, raises questions about the personal finances of the first family, the management and accountability of corporations controlled by the Marcos Government, the handling of American aid to the islands and the role of the Marcos family in questionable payments by American corporations.

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